When we had just met each other, Kari and I had each a show within one block of each other on the same night. It seemed to crazy to be true because we had never met each other up until two weeks before that and now we had spent all this time together and now fate is pushing us together again by having us both play a show a block away. So we talked a little bit and when we realized our luck, it was just too good to be true so on the first break I went down to her gig.

She was playing at a place called Vanzo's in Edwardsville and I was playing at a place called Laurie's Place a block away, and on that first break I came to the bar and her bandmates didn't look too happy to see me, but Kari didn't mind... she was just too happy to let them take it away and she had brought a camera with her. The thing that killed me, was it was an old analog camera, since I am known as the analog man! I love all of those old things and I really felt a twinge when she pulled out that film camera and then proceeded to take a selfie...

You know there's a reason why people didn't do selfies before digital cameras! The reason being, that you can't see what you just took and that became really clear afterwards when both of us thought the same thing and realized we couldn't look at the damn thing! And it wasn't that Kerry was that romantic or had high of hopes for us... she wanted to show the picture to her mom and her best friend to see what they thought of me! 'Cause I was a few years older than her and she liked me but was just curious what her mother and her friend would say. I wasn't aware of that but then again it wouldn't have bothered me anyway. I might have done the same thing!

So a couple of weeks later I was talking to her on the phone and we were making some plans and I mentioned the camera and I asked her "didn't I take the last pictures from that role at the picnic you played?"...

She said yes and I asked her did get them developed? And she said she did, so I asked her how the picture of us turned out, from that Vanzo's gig and she blurted out "dude, what is wrong with you! " And that took me by surprise and I asked her what she meant and she said "seriously what is wrong with you? Your skin looks so much better than mine! And your hair is so shiny, there's a glare in the picture from it"... she paused... then said "I swear you're prettier than me!!"

It didn't seem possible so I thought she was messing with me and I asked her if she was serious and she said "yes! I'm serious it's kind of crazy!"

And I said "I don't think there's any way I could look prettier than you. That doesn't seem possible on any day and how come you think that's true?"

And she said "well I would tell you to see for yourself, but I destroyed it!"

"aw, really?"

What I didn't know at the time was she was a bit insecure about how we looked as a couple so she had showed it too her mother and her best friend just to get a little feedback just to basically have them tell her what she thought she already knew.

But it didn’t exactly happen! When she showed the picture to her friend Mary she looked at it and she said “Oh yeah! You guys look really cute together!” And Kari said “do you think he looks older?”

Mary furrowed her brow and looked close at the picture “You mean he’s younger?” and Kari asked her “does he look younger???”

She looked again and she said “no actually, he looks younger!” And Kari gasped a little bit in her dramatic fashion and said “really?!”

“yeah he looks younger, but not much, but he actually looks prettier than you!” And Kerry gasped again and said “what!!??”

“Yeah! He looks a lot prettier than you in this picture at least. So what’s the deal? Is the older is he younger is he a girl?” Kari said you’ll meet him in a week or two how’s that?”

“OK, fine,” she said. So at this point I’m looking pretty good, but Kerry’s a bit put off by all of this so she goes to see her mother and her mother… Well… Let’s just say she’s not as nice as her friend and wasn't really aware of my age difference or anything and just plowed right over her and said the same thing, nearly exactly, at which point Kerry was pretty gob smacked, since she was smokin’ hot and more than little humbled by the experience. So when I asked about that picture finally, it was already a fresh insult in her mind and a very sore spot that I had just poked, so she destroyed the picture.

Now cut to ten years later. I went to go live in Colorado with another girl, which was huge, because I couldn’t stand to watch Kari go down.

I didn’t want to see her die and I didn’t want to get anymore closer to her than I was. It just seemed like a lot of pain and sadness. So there I was in Colorado, in a little room in a house that I had rented when I got there with the girl I went… with who turned out to be a complete loser and had brought all of the street life into our house to steal what little we had, while I’m trying to detox in my room. The house was always FULL… the homeless, people dealing drugs, people MAKING drugs, all there in my living room, making all kinds of noise as I’m laying there sick and detoxing in my room.

So I decided to call back home to try and kill some of my loneliness and I called one of my friends and I asked him what had been going on there and he said a lot but the weirdest thing is he kept seeing Kari in my town every day. And I said really? I wonder why she’s there all the time. That’s like an hour and a half from her house.

He said “she's there for you, man. She comes all this way to see if anybody’s heard from you, if you’re ok… and I gotta tell ya she looks really good!” “really?” I asked… because last time I saw her, she was rough”.

“Yeah. She cleaned up. She’s going to the clinic she’s not doing the hard stuff anymore she's totally different… and I guess a little bit sad about everything, but I’ve never seen her more wide awake more sober, and more… beautiful.”

“I wonder why.” I thought aloud.

“well, you know. I can tell you… first, she was just so vulnerable and so hot, so I decided to make my move. I’m going to say my piece and I did... and she said ‘you’ve gotta be kidding. I could never do that to Sean!’” and I said “have you looked around? Because he’s not here! He left here to live someplace else and he left here with another girl.” She said “it’s my fault he did that. I screwed things up so bad over and over and he just had no faith in me... or us. I made the biggest mistake of my life with Sean but I’m gonna do what I can to make it right.”

“She said she made the biggest mistake in her life?”

“Yeah, man. Yeah she did and you’re kind of a lucky bastard if you ask me.”

“Yeah, maybe. I would have been a lot luckier if she said something like that before I fucking moved to 1000 miles away, but yeah.”

So I called her up and she answered almost a little bit bewildered as if she hadn’t expected me and I said, “you wouldn’t believe how much I miss you!”

And she said “oh, I would believe it.”

I said I talked to George and she said “Oh yeah? Did he tell you he tried to hit on me?”

“Yes! in fact he did. And he told me that you turned him down squarely and you did it for me even though I am 1000 miles away.”

She said, “truth be known he's really not my type, but yea, I wouldn’t do that to you.”

“He also said you said something about me something about the greatest mistake... the biggest mistake you ever made in your life so far”.... and the words hung in the air for a minute and then she just blurted out,

“I love you Sean. I’m madly stupidly in love with you and I hate that I screwed up the last ten years, made you run away. I am hopelessly and forever in love with you.”

Now we had been together for ten years, but those words had never been said, by either of us. I was stunned, after that long. TEN YEARS.

I just sat there with the back of my head blown off and and she just kept saying it, and saying how sorry she was and that she had been a train wreck. She said she was so worried that it would fail like all the others and like all the others I would never want to talk to her ever again...

I mentioned that almost all of them ended badly, because we were together through all of them. She agreed, but said “yea, but the idea of never talking to you again... that scared me more than anything. I’ve never been scared before! But talking to you, and your friendship has kept me here on this planet this long... losing it would probably be the end of me.

I told her I loved her and it sounded strange and felt strange... so I said it over and over... about 10 or 15 times in a row because I had been saving a bunch of them up for a long time, and finally they sounded normal and I stopped saying it.

And she said calmly “I know. If there’s one thing I’ve always been sure of is the fact that you love me and I know every time that you wanted to say it... I know every time you bit your tongue and tripped on the words like that time on your birthday in the field on the quilt.”

I said “yeah”.

And Kari said “I wanted to say it that night. I wanted to say it’s so bad”.

“why didn't you?”

“I don’t know. I guess I’m kind of a coward.”

“ I’ve never thought of you as a coward, Kari.”

“well I’ve never been brave enough to get sober and I’ve never been brave enough to tell you how I felt and now you're 1000 miles away and now I’m getting sober here without you and everything is pretty messed up and it’s my fault.”

We talked for almost that whole day and it was getting dark outside and it was getting late and I told her I had to sleep for awhile because I was feeling pretty bad I was going to be going through some serious detox, within the next day she told me she had a surprise for me and I said “you’ve already given me the biggest surprise of my life” and she said you like this one too and we hung.

I sat there in the silence of my room with the sound of the drugged up crowd in the other room and my eyes filled up with tears as I thought about us having an actual life together. It just made me so sad for all the years that we had wasted and then my text message dinged.

I opened my phone and there was a file and I opened it and... it was that goddamned PICTURE from our first two weeks!!

She had kept it all that time and never showed me until that day and I looked at it and I remembered everything she said back then and the tears just kept coming but they weren't sad ones...

I finally had someone that felt like home to me and someone that was as romantic as I was and I had been waiting for her to just say those words... but I could not believe that picture... looking at these two young people, completely different then the two people that we were that day, but still together and about 100 times more into each other than back then. And we'd already done some great music, and knew we were endlessly hot for each other, but this was new. .

And when I write these memories down... it's like burning my heart with a lit cigarette... But I owe it to her. I've thought of naming the book "Saving Kari"... because I couldn't save her but I have her here for myself and everyone to see. So I'll save her... everything I can and save what I know... the person I knew and the experience of it... that's the only way I can save her now.